

From: "bettyfetscher@yahoo.com%inter2" <bettyfetscher@yahoo.com>
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Email: bettyfetscher@yahoo.com

FirstName: Anne Elizabeth

LastName: Fetscher, Ph.D.

Address1:

Address2:

City:

State: California

zipcode:

Question1:

Question2: Despite the fact that consumers have repeatedly responded positively to measures that increase farmed-animal welfare standards (such as by demonstrating willingness to pay more for items like cage-free eggs and organic milk), our country has lagged behind many others, notably European nations, in terms of laws protecting animals in agriculture. As such, we are creating an environment in which our nation is at an economic disadvantage relative to competitors, based, in part, on our unwillingness to create and enforce meaningful legislation benefiting farm animals.

In order to keep pace with our major competitors, the more egregious forms of animal mistreatment that are currently legal in our country should be outlawed. These include: the used of battery cages for laying hens, the practice of forced molting to boost egg production, the confinement of calves for the production of veal, the use of gestation crates for sows, and animal manipulations, such as tail docking, dehorning, debeaking, and the castration and removal of teeth from young pigs, without anesthesia. The production of foie gras by force-feeding ducks should also be banned; what California has done in this regard should serve as a model for the entire county. In addition to the banning of the above practices, humane slaughter rights should be extended to cover poultry, rabbits, and animals used for fur production, in addition to the other farmed animals already covered.

Question3: I am opposed to all cruel animal husbandry practices that are currently not only legal, but subsidized by public money. I am convinced that, like humans, other animals are capable of feeling pain and experiencing fear, and therefore, like humans, have a right not to be subjected to abuse. Nonetheless, so many of the practices that take place regularly on high-density, commercial farming operations (factory farms) undoubtedly constitute what could be considered torture for animals. I have done all that I can to limit my own contribution to this phenomenon by cutting all animal products out of my diet and wardrobe (and I know countless others who have done so, as well, out of ethical concerns), and yet, our tax dollars still support these atrocities, which is very upsetting to me.

I would like to see an end to all farm subsidies that directly or indirectly contribute to animal suffering. I am particularly opposed to subsidies that promote, in any way, whatsoever, the following: use of battery cages for laying hens and the practice of forced molting to boost egg production, crate confinement of calves for the production of veal, the use of gestation crates for sows, bodily manipulations, such as castration and removal of teeth from young pigs, without anesthesia, tail docking, dehorning, and debeaking, force-feeding of ducks for the production of foie gras, slaughter of poultry without first rendering them unconscious in a painless way, and forced serial gestation and the

use of hormones to maximize milk production in dairy cows.

Vegetarianism and veganism (the practice of maintaining a completely herbivorous diet, including the elimination of dairy and eggs) are rapidly gaining popularity in our country, as people become enlightened not only about the suffering of animals in the current factory farming climate, but also about the serious environmental consequences of factory farming and the myriad, negative health consequences of an animal-based diet (combined with the fact that consumption of animal products is, by no means, necessary for human survival and well being). It follows that, as more and more people eschew meat, dairy, eggs, and leather, there will be increasing objection to tax dollars supporting the continued production of such commodities. An elimination, or meaningful reduction, of farm subsidies that support factory farming is the obvious answer to the changing social mores.

Question4: To date, Farm Policy has provided a means by which animal farming operations can grow both in size, and in terms of the density of animals maintained. This has come about, in part, through federal funding of means to accommodate the massive amounts of animal waste that are generated by factory farms. Yet repeated reports in the present day, of occurrences such as the spilling of manure lagoons, and the release of animal waste into rivers and streams, resulting in water contamination and fish kills, is a constant reminder that the supposed fixes to facilitate factory farming in sustainable ways continue to be prone to failure. Despite attempts to curtail damages, factory farms are still hazardous to the environment and to human health, and in general, detrimental to the quality of life on this planet. While Farm Policy appropriations and measures can be geared toward reducing pollution of the environment by animal waste, the only true safeguard against accidents stemming from factory farms is the elimination of the high-density husbandry altogether. An important first step in this process is the elimination of federal subsidies supporting high-density animal farming.

Question5:

Question6: The non-profit organization, Farm Sanctuary, recently conducted a review of animal agriculture research projects performed and/or funded by the USDA, and arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Less than 2% of currently funded projects in animal agriculture research address animal well-being, while the remaining 98% is aimed at supporting the agriculture industry by increasing production and profitability and/or decreasing costs.
2. Research projects identified as being for the purpose of animal welfare/well-being frequently cite objectives others than welfare including food safety, waste management and international trade.
3. Few of the current well-being projects address animal welfare only, without regard to production. The impression is given that modifications in current practices are acceptable only if they both improve welfare and increase productivity.
4. Some projects propose to solve welfare problems by changing the nature of the animals themselves instead of the nature of the environmental conditions or management practices causing the problem.
5. In many cases, government-funded projects appear to be working at cross-purposes, i.e. public money is being spent to fund research into animal welfare problems that are exacerbated by the application of findings from research projects to increase production, also funded by the government. Instead of supporting genuine animal well-being research, USDA has spent an enormous amount of federal monies to fund research to increase production and promote technologies, such as

genetic engineering, that cause animal suffering and are opposed by a large segment of the public. Even in situations where USDA research has yielded findings with the potential to benefit animal welfare, little has been done to apply the findings. For example, despite the fact that USDA research has shown that mutilations like debeaking and tail docking cause animal suffering, the agency has failed to take any action to prohibit the practices or to penalize producers that participate in them.

Farm Policy should be redesigned such that federal money is not being spent to fund research promoting increased output of animal products, but rather should support research promoting humane and sustainable agriculture.